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**TOWN OF GRANBY
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2021
VIA ZOOM
7:00 P.M.
AGENDA**

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. PUBLIC SESSION

III. MINUTES

A. Approval of Regular Minutes – February 16, 2021

IV. UNFINISHED OR TABLED BUSINESS

V. BUSINESS

A. Resignations and Appointments

Vacancies: (2) Conservation Commission

B. Executive Session: Pursuant to Conn. Gen. Statute 1-200(2), the Board moves to go into Executive Session to Discuss Collective Bargaining. Town Manager John D. Ward and Administration Finance Officer Kimi Cheng are invited to attend.

C. Budget Presentation

VI. TOWN MANAGERS REPORTS

VII. FIRST SELECTMAN REPORTS (B. Scott Kuhnly)

VIII. SELECTMAN REPORTS

(Sally S. King, Mark C. Neumann, Edward E. Ohannessian, Glenn G. Ballard)

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2021.

**TOWN OF GRANBY
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
FEBRUARY 16, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by First Selectman B. Scott Kuhnly at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: B. Scott Kuhnly, Glenn Ballard, Sally King, Mark Neumann, Edward Ohannessian, John D. Ward, Town Manager; and John Bell, Student Liaison

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. PUBLIC SESSION

John Adams, 3 Westview Drive, addressed the Board stating he was a member of the former Town-Owned Land Study Committee. In light of the recent discussions considering the sale of the development rights for 107 East Street, Mr. Adams wanted to remind people of some of the study findings. The survey done at that time generated 391 responses and no one was in favor of selling the property. The primary use should be agricultural and to remain in town hands. A total of 76% of the respondents were in favor of leasing the property for agricultural use and 50% were in favor of the property generating revenue. He believes selling the property development rights for a small amount of money would not be appropriate at this time.

Bill Glueck, 18 Barkhamsted Road, thanked the Department of Public Works for keeping the roads in good condition during the storm. He recently read the article in the Granby Drummer by Board of Finance Chairman Mike Guarco discussing the proposed 0% increase for the upcoming budget. He hopes the Board of Selectmen will support the Board of Finance and that the budget details will be available to residents. He is also interested in any updates regarding Kearns School. He also noted that there was not a start time on tonight's agenda.

III. MINUTES

ON A MOTION by Selectman King, seconded by Selectman Neumann, the Board voted unanimously (5-0-0) to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 1, 2021 with the correction: Item V.B. the motion was read by M. Neumann, seconded by E. Ohannessian, it went to discussion and was not voted upon. The motion at the end of discussion to table the agenda item remains as originally stated.

IV. UNFINISHED OR TABLED BUSINESS

A. Consideration of 2021 Bond Refunding Resolution

Town Manager Ward reported the Town's financial advisor, Dixworks, LLC, a representative from underwriter Piper Sandler & Co., and Marie Phelan, Bond Counsel from Pullman & Comley have been invited to attend tonight's meeting to answer questions. Mr. Dix introduced himself and noted he forwarded documents to the Selectmen earlier this afternoon to help them understand the proposed transaction. In these documents, the savings are spelled out for each year, with an average savings of \$16,000 per year. He encouraged the savings be spread out. The actual cost would be \$16,750 for the credit rating. The Trust is \$10,500. Pricing advisor is \$3,000. Dixworks is \$27,840. Pullman & Comley is \$50,000. That is

typically paid at closing. Selectman Ohannessian inquired if this should be brought before the Board of Finance. J. Ward replied they are not statutorily required to do so. Bond counsel replied only the Board of Selectmen need to approve a refunding and a Town Meeting is not needed as they are just refinancing. There was a question in regard to paying down the debt instead of refinancing at this cost. It was noted that 2023 is the call date and debt cannot be paid down until then. Even at this cost, the estimated savings to the town would be \$195,834.

ON A MOTION by Selectman King, seconded by Selectman Neumann, the Board of Selectmen voted to adopt the attached resolution for appropriation of five million six hundred thousand dollars (\$5,600,000) to refund certain of the town's outstanding bonds and authorizes the issuance of refunding bonds to finance such appropriation.

E. Ohannessian noted that although he realizes the Town is saving money however, he still believes this information should be shared with the Board of Finance. The Town Manager noted he has spoken to the Board of Finance Chairman regarding this matter. Selectman Ballard questioned the dollar amount in the Resolution. Marie Fallon responded that is the maximum amount and they will only issue what is needed.

The board voted (3-0-2) on the resolution. Selectman Ohannessian and Ballard abstained.

B. Kearns School Update – Mike Gorman

Mike Goman from Goman & York reported he has visited Kearns School a few times to inspect the property and has begun a marketing campaign. They have been reaching out to direct contacts they know who may have an interest in the property. Mr. Goman provided background information about the market, stating retail and office development has slowed significantly as a result of COVID-19 but he is confident things will begin to turn around. If they don't see any interest within 90 to 120 days, they will rethink their plan. If there is any local interest, he may be contacted at gomanyork.com or 860-841-3271.

C. Consideration of Sale of Development Rights for 107 East Street

Abby Kenyon, Director of Community Development, responded to questions that were asked at a previous meeting regarding the sale of development rights at 107 East Street.

1. It is possible to split off a piece of the land for future Town use. However, a new purchase of development rights configuration and a new appraisal would be needed. In addition, the State would want to ensure that enough important soils remained within the reconfigured areas.
2. In regard to impervious surface area, the PDR offer restricts impervious areas to 5% and it is not negotiable. This is based on both Connecticut General Statute and Department of Agriculture Policy.

3. Ground-mount solar panels would be allowed provided the system is used for an agricultural operation/business and not commercial use. The ground-mount solar would count towards the 5% impervious coverage allowed.
4. The Department of Agricultural may consider modifying their offer if a new appraisal is submitted that shows a change in value.

D. Executive Session: Pursuant to Conn. Gen. Statute 1-200(6)(D), the Board moves to go into Executive Session to Discuss Collective Bargaining. Town Manager John D. Ward and Administration Finance Officer Kimi Cheng are invited to attend.

Executive session not needed.

V. BUSINESS

A. Resignations and Appointments to be Considered

No resignations or appointments received.

VI. TOWN MANAGER REPORTS

A. Town Manager Notes

Town Manager had nothing more to add.

B. Budget Operations

J. Ward reviewed the budget operations for January 2021. Property revenue is at 95% and the State education total is at 43%. Intergovernmental revenue is at 43%, while filing fees for the Town Clerk are at 113%, with an excess of \$26,238. Miscellaneous revenue is at 487% which includes Grant (\$5,000) and CFR Grant (112,277.31) and internal budget transfers. Expenses remain in line with what was budgeted. At this time, there is nothing on the watch list.

C. Department Management Notes

The library is planning to re-open on a limited basis. Town Manager Ward reported he has no re-opening plan for town offices at this time. He noted that COVID-19 information changes quickly and decisions depend on the requirements of the Department of Public Health.

D. Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Plan

The Town Manager reported the final version of the Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Plan has been completed and will be distributed to Boards, Commissions and staff. It is expected it will be used to implement the goals outlined in the POCD.

The Implementation Committee will plan to reconvene in early 2022 to review progress. Per the Committee Charge, they will report back to the Board of Selectmen on an annual basis.

VII. FIRST SELECTMAN REPORTS (B. Scott Kuhnly)

S. Kuhnly thanked the DPW for taking good care of the roads during the recent storm.

VIII. SELECTMAN REPORTS (Sally King, Vice Chairman; Glenn Ballard, Mark Neumann, Edward Ohannessian and John Bell Student Liaison)

G. Ballard reported he has provided the Town Manager with some suggestions for the town website.

J. Bell reported the boys and girls basketball teams both won their games and the girls will play again tomorrow. The high school will be holding a food drive over the next ten days to benefit the Granby Food Bank.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

ON A MOTION by Selectman King, seconded by Selectman Neumann, the Board voted unanimously (5-0-0) to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



John D. Ward
Town Manager

TOWN OF GRANBY

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 1, 2021

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: John D. Ward, Town Manager



REGARDING: V. BUSINESS - ITEM C.
Budget Presentation

My proposed Operating, Debt Service, and Capital Improvement Budget for the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year has been delivered to you tonight, along with a detailed budget memo. This memo is designed to provide a quicker overview than enclosed.

Budget in a conservatively and fiscally responsible manner that will provide municipal services to our citizens.

We will continue to invest in capital.

GENERAL FUND	FY 2021 ADOPTED	FY 2022 PROPOSED	INCREASE (DECREASE)	% CHANGE
Town Operations	\$11,738,716	\$12,034,935	296,219	2.52%
Debt Service	2,089,875	1,644,620	(445,255)	(21.31%)
Capital Budget	1,750,000	1,850,000	100,000	5.71%
Total	\$15,578,591	\$15,529,555	(49,036)	(0.31)%

This Budget meets the Guidelines set forth by the Board of Finance of limiting any increase to **Town Operations** to 2.52%.

There are no increases in positions for Police, Public Works or Finance.

Town Operations increase by \$296,219. The main cost drivers of the increase are:

Contingency Misc. Expense	87,000
Wages	79,740
Health Insurance	53,493
IT Operations	16,500
Mid-CT Tipping Fee	14,800
Business Package	12,849
Waste Collection	11,970
Contribution to Dog Fund	10,000
Pension & ICMA	7,613
Contribution to Granby Ambulance	<u>5,000</u>

Total	298,965
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Risk Factors

1. Storm Overtime
 2. Salt
 3. Gasoline
 4. IT support
 5. Union negotiation
- **The town's debt service** budget decreased in 2020-21 by \$687,480. Debt service for 2021-22 will decrease by \$445,255 to a new total of \$1,644,620. An analysis of town debt service history is shown on page B-35.
 - The present Capital Budget is contained within the town budget with an amount of \$1,850,000 supported by General Fund Tax Revenue. \$75,000 for Revaluation.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The Capital Program (E167) and Capital Budget (D157)

THE FISCAL 2021-22 BUDGET AND GUIDELINE PROCESS

On December 21, 2020 the Town Manager submitted a Plus-One Budget to the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen voted to submit the Plus-One Budget to the Board of Finance.

Each year the Board of Finance, as the town's budget making authority, after receiving the Plus-One Budget from the town and Board of Education establishes a new "**Guideline**" for Town. Revenue estimates, excluding the new current tax levy, are projected at \$8,339,882¹. Also on the revenue side, a revenue transfer from fund balance is proposed. This amount is to be determined after information of Certified Net Grant List and BOE Budget becomes available.

GRAND LIST

The 2020 Net Adjusted Grand List is the one to be used to compute a new mill rate for the 2021-22 Budget.

The Assessor's Net Grand List for the list year ending October 1, 2020 is \$1,037,144,340 or a 1.48% increase.

At our present mill rate of 39.61, the new Grand List will result in approximately \$597,408 in additional revenue.

JDW/kc

¹ This amount includes the use of the Governor's proposed state budget revenues to the town for the next year. It is subject to final state legislative adjustments during the 2020 state legislative session.

RatingsDirect®

Summary:

Granby, Connecticut; General Obligation

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Summary:

Granby, Connecticut; General Obligation

Credit Profile

US\$5.255 mil GO rfdg bnds ser 2021 B due 02/01/2033

<i>Long Term Rating</i>	AA+/Stable	New
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US\$3.4 mil GO bnds ser 2021 A due 03/01/2041

<i>Long Term Rating</i>	AA+/Stable	New
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Granby GO

<i>Long Term Rating</i>	AA+/Stable	Affirmed
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Granby GO (MBIA) (National)

<i>Unenhanced Rating</i>	AA+(SPUR)/Stable	Affirmed
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Many issues are enhanced by bond insurance.

Rating Action

S&P Global Ratings assigned its 'AA+' long-term rating to Granby, Conn.'s series 2021A general obligation (GO) bonds and series 2021B GO refunding bonds, totaling \$3.4 million and \$5.3 million, respectively. S&P Global Ratings also affirmed its 'AA+' rating on the town's existing debt. The outlook is stable.

Granby's full-faith-and-credit pledge secures the bonds.

Officials plan to use the series 2021A bond proceeds to fund a bridge and school project. The series 2021B bond proceeds will refund the town's series 2013 GO bonds for present-value savings.

Credit overview

The long-term rating is supported by the town's strong financial operations, as evidenced by continued positive general fund results and increases in available reserves over the past few years. Furthermore, we believe the town's stable financial position is supported by management's conservative budgeting approach and stable economy, with access to the Hartford metropolitan statistical area (MSA), coupled with manageable fixed costs. Although the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic remains to be seen, we believe the town's improved reserve position, conservative budgeting practices, and strong tax base should provide it with cushion to absorb any unanticipated declines in revenues or unexpected stagnation in its economy as a result of pandemic-related events. Nevertheless, the stable outlook reflects S&P Global Rating's expectation that Granby's management will continue to make the necessary budgetary adjustments in order to maintain balanced operations and stable reserve levels. Our outlook is generally for two years, but we see some risks due to the COVID-19 pandemic over the next 12 months.

The long-term rating further reflects our opinion of the town's:

- Very strong economy, with access to a broad and diverse MSA;
- Adequate management, with standard financial policies and practices under our Financial Management Assessment

(FMA) methodology;

- Strong budgetary performance, with operating surpluses in the general fund and at the total governmental fund level in fiscal 2020;
- Very strong budgetary flexibility, with an available fund balance in fiscal 2020 of 19% of operating expenditures;
- Very strong liquidity, with total government available cash at 27.4% of total governmental fund expenditures and 5.5x governmental debt service, and access to external liquidity that we consider strong;
- Very strong debt and contingent liability profile, with debt service carrying charges at 5.0% of expenditures and net direct debt that is 24.4% of total governmental fund revenue, as well as low overall net debt at less than 3.0% of market value and rapid amortization, with 79.8% of debt scheduled to be retired in 10 years; and
- Strong institutional framework score.

Environmental, social, and governance factors

We have evaluated Granby's environmental, social, and governance factors relative to the town's economy, financial measures, management, and debt and long-term liability profile. We acknowledge that, absent implications of COVID-19, we consider the town's social risks, governance, and environmental risks to be in line with the sector standard.

Stable Outlook

Downside scenario

If financial performance deteriorates, leading to a continuous reduction of reserves and weakening of budgetary flexibility, we could lower the rating.

Upside scenario

Although upward rating potential is limited at this time, if local and state recessionary pressures subside, the town's economic indicators improve to levels that we consider comparable with those of higher-rated peers, and Granby implements stronger financial management policies while continuing to increase reserves consistently with strong budgetary performance, we could raise the rating.

Credit Opinion

Very strong economy

We consider Granby's economy very strong. The town, with an estimated population of 11,279, is located in Hartford County in the Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford MSA, which we consider to be broad and diverse. The town has a projected per capita effective buying income of 146% of the national level and per capita market value of \$129,320. Overall, the town's market value grew by 1.6% over the past year to \$1.5 billion in 2021. The county unemployment rate was 3.9% in 2019.

Located just 14 miles from the downtown area, Granby is a primarily suburban community whose residents have easy access to the Hartford area's financial services and government-sector jobs. Access to a diverse job base and land

availability have made Granby a desirable community, contributing to the long-term appreciation of property value.

The town's grand list grew 3% between 2019 and 2021 as a result of a stable real estate market. Residential properties account for 80% of the tax base followed by industrial at 4.8%. There is no taxpayer concentration, as the 10 leading payers account for 5% of the grand list. According to management, there is a 235-unit apartment that has been permitted for construction in Granby Center. Management believes this project could encourage new business development in the area and it expects to generate new tax revenue once complete.

While we expect Granby's economy will remain stable, we believe the adverse effects of COVID-19 could potentially have a negative impact on the local economy, especially as S&P Global Economics forecasts a notable decline in regional and national GDP for the short term (See "Staying Home For The Holidays," published Dec. 2, 2020, and "Outlook For U.S. Local Governments: Revenue Pressures Mount And Choices Get Harder," published Jan. 6, 2021, on RatingsDirect.) Although officials indicate many of the town's major employers have remain operational throughout the pandemic and tax collections remain very strong, we believe countywide unemployment figures (8% as of November 2020) could remain elevated if the current economic disruption is prolonged or if countywide employment sectors experience further contraction. This could weaken the town's economic metrics and potentially change our view of its economy.

Adequate management

We view the town's management as adequate, with standard financial policies and practices under our FMA methodology, indicating the finance department maintains adequate policies in some but not all key areas.

Management's budget assumptions are generally conservative and include a five-year historical trend analysis when developing the budget. The town also presents budget-to-actual results to the board on a monthly basis. A formal 10-year capital improvement plan (CIP) exists, although it does not identify funding sources. Management also maintains a formal long-term financial plan that it updates annually. Although it does not have a formal reserve policy, the town has a basic debt management policy that limits debt service to no more than 10% of expenses. It also follows state guidelines with regards to investments and has a formal investment policy for its pension plan, although it does not report regularly on investments to the board. The town has cyber-security protections in place and maintains various backups of its networks and systems.

Strong budgetary performance

Granby's budgetary performance is strong, in our opinion. The town had operating surpluses of 6.1% of expenditures in the general fund and of 3.2% across all governmental funds in fiscal 2020. Our assessment accounts for the fact that we expect budgetary results could deteriorate somewhat from 2020 results in the near term.

Fiscal 2020 results include adjustments for recurring transfers.

According to management, the fiscal 2020 positive general fund performance was primarily due to the district receiving higher-than-budgeted state aid and property tax revenues. In addition, the town saw an increase in building permits and licenses revenues. On the expense side, the town experienced savings in expenditures including about \$900,000 in school department costs. Prior to this, the town has consistently maintained general fund surplus between fiscal years 2017-2019, which management largely attributes to conservative budgeting.

The fiscal 2021 budget totals \$47.9 million, which is a 3.8% increase from the previous year, and includes a fund balance appropriation of \$600,000, which the town has historically done as a conservative measure. Given the limited impact the pandemic has had on the town and management's already conservative budgeting approach, the fiscal 2021 budget did not contain any major changes in revenues or expenses. The town also increased the mill rate by about 1.8% over fiscal 2020 to 4.34 in fiscal 2021. Officials indicate budget-to-actual results are tracking favorably and the town currently projects to end the year with a general fund surplus.

The town's local property taxes accounted for 76% of general fund revenue, while intergovernmental aid was about 21%, which includes on-behalf state payments for the teacher's retirement plan.

While the unprecedented widespread effects of COVID-19 could significantly affect state revenue and many local economies, including Granby's, and could potentially result in weaker budgetary performance over the short-term, we expect the town's budgetary performance will remain strong due to its conservative budgeting, predominantly property tax revenue base, and limited impact from the pandemic on its finances and economy.

Very strong budgetary flexibility

Granby's budgetary flexibility is very strong, in our view, with an available fund balance in fiscal 2020 of 19% of operating expenditures, or \$9.7 million.

Over the past few years, the town has consistently improved fund balance levels. Although the town does not have a formal reserve policy, officials indicate the town does not plan to draw down reserves. The town appropriated \$600,000 of fund balance into its fiscal 2021 budget, although officials do not expect this to materialize by fiscal year-end.

Very strong liquidity

In our opinion, Granby's liquidity is very strong, with total government available cash at 27.4% of total governmental fund expenditures and 5.5x governmental debt service in 2020. In our view, the town has strong access to external liquidity if necessary.

We believe that Granby's issuance of GO bonds during the past 20 years demonstrates the town's strong access to external liquidity. We understand it does not currently have any contingent-liquidity risks from financial instruments with payment provisions that change on the occurrence of certain events. Therefore, we expect the liquidity profile will remain very strong over the next two fiscal years.

Very strong debt and contingent liability profile

In our view, Granby's debt and contingent liability profile is very strong. Total governmental fund debt service is 5.0% of total governmental fund expenditures, and net direct debt is 24.4% of total governmental fund revenue. Overall net debt is low at 0.9% of market value, and approximately 79.8% of the direct debt is scheduled to be repaid within 10 years, which are in our view positive credit factors.

With this issuance, the town will have about \$13.8 million in total direct debt outstanding. We understand the town may issue \$3 million-\$4 million in additional debt over the next two years for additional capital projects, including a bridge and school project. However, we don't expect this new issuance to have a substantial impact on the town's debt profile.

Pension and other postemployment benefits highlights:

- We do not view pension and other postemployment benefits (OPEB) liabilities as an immediate source of credit pressure for Granby given our opinion of current strong plan funding status.
- Under a special funding situation, the state is obligated to make pension contributions on behalf of the town for the Connecticut State Teachers' Retirement System (CSTRS), mitigating risks of escalating costs, despite poor plan funding.
- Although OPEB liabilities are funded on a pay-as-you-go basis, which given claims volatility, as well as medical cost and demographic trends, is likely to lead to escalating costs, the town has legal flexibility to alter OPEB benefits, which we view as a potential means to mitigate escalating costs.

Granby participates in the following plans as of June 30, 2020:

- Public Employees Retirement System (PERS), 83.2% funded, a single-employer defined benefit pension administered by the town with a net pension liability equal to \$3.8 million.
- CSTRS, which was 52% funded; and
- A defined-benefit health care plan that provides retiree health care until death; 20.5% funded with an OPEB liability of about \$8.9 million.

Granby's combined required pension and actual OPEB contributions totaled 2.7% of total governmental fund expenditures in 2020. Of that amount, 1.0% represented required contributions to pension obligations, and 1.6% represented OPEB payments. The town made its full annual required pension contribution in 2020.

In addition, the town's teachers and other certified members of the board of education participate in the CSTRS, a cost-sharing, multiple-employer, defined benefit pension plan administered and funded by the state. Connecticut is statutorily required to make 100% of the required contribution on behalf of Granby.

Fiscal 2020 contributions exceeded minimum funding progress. The plan maintains a closed amortization schedule of 13 years and a 6.75% discount rate, which we view as a positive. We believe this reduces potential future budgetary stress and limits any potential increase in the liability should the plan not achieve its targeted investment returns. The plan also maintains a payroll growth assumption of 3.5%, which we believe should allow the town to make annual contributions without adding too much pressure on the budget.

Granby also provides OPEBs to retirees. As of fiscal 2020, the OPEB plan had an unfunded actuarial accrued liability of \$8.9 million. The town has created an OPEB trust, which totals \$2.3 million as of fiscal 2020. While the town does not currently have a set amount that it plans to contribute annually to the trust fund, contributions in the past have nearly met or exceeded the OPEB actuarial determined contributions (ADC). Most recently, the town contributed 124% of its OPEB ADC in fiscal 2020.

Strong institutional framework

The institutional framework score for Connecticut municipalities is strong.

Related Research

- S&P Public Finance Local GO Criteria: How We Adjust Data For Analytic Consistency, Sept. 12, 2013
- Criteria Guidance: Assessing U.S. Public Finance Pension And Other Postemployment Obligations For GO Debt, Local Government GO Ratings, And State Ratings, Oct. 7, 2019
- Through The ESG Lens 2.0: A Deeper Dive Into U.S. Public Finance Credit Factors, April 28, 2020
- 2020 Update Of Institutional Framework For U.S. Local Governments

Certain terms used in this report, particularly certain adjectives used to express our view on rating relevant factors, have specific meanings ascribed to them in our criteria, and should therefore be read in conjunction with such criteria. Please see Ratings Criteria at www.standardandpoors.com for further information. Complete ratings information is available to subscribers of RatingsDirect at www.capitaliq.com. All ratings affected by this rating action can be found on S&P Global Ratings' public website at www.standardandpoors.com. Use the Ratings search box located in the left column.

The Office of Governor Ned Lamont

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Governor Lamont Announces Connecticut Will Continue Age-Based Approach To COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility; Educators and Childcare Providers To Have Dedicated Clinics in March

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

GOVERNOR NED LAMONT

02/22/2021

Governor Lamont Announces Connecticut Will Continue Age-Based Approach To COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility; Educators and Childcare Providers To Have Dedicated Clinics in March

Governor Directs Department of Public Health and Vaccine Providers to Prioritize High-Risk Communities

(HARTFORD, CT) – In an effort to ensure that Connecticut continues taking the most equitable and efficient approach to quickly administering the COVID-19 vaccine to as many people as possible, Governor Ned Lamont today announced that the state will continue with an age-based approach to expanding eligibility to the vaccine, explaining that other previously considered scenarios proved overly complex and confusing, would potentially exacerbate inequities in vaccine distribution, and slow down the process of providing it to Connecticut residents.

Age is one of the strongest factors contributing to COVID-19 deaths, with 96 percent of COVID-19 deaths in Connecticut occurring in people over the age of 55.

To provide clarity and predictability, the governor today announced a schedule for age-based eligibility for the next several months. By laying out a clear timeline for eligibility for the vaccine, the strategy allows everyone in the state, including essential workers and those with chronic conditions, to know when they will be able to schedule an appointment. The planned schedule is as follows:

- **March 1, 2021:** Expands to age group 55 to 64
- **March 22, 2021:** Expands to age group 45 to 54

- **April 12, 2021:** Expands to age group 35 to 44
- **May 3, 2021:** Expands to age group 16 to 34

To further ensure equitable allocation of the vaccine, Governor Lamont also announced that he is directing the Connecticut Department of Public Health to set numerical targets and work with vaccine providers to ensure that vaccines are administered to people living in the highest-risk communities in proportion to their population. These targets and the associated strategies will be announced in the coming days.

In addition to the age-based eligibility, preK-12 school staff and teachers, and professional childcare providers will be eligible to receive the vaccine in March at dedicated clinics that will be set up specifically for those sectors. Educators and childcare professionals will soon receive information from their school administrators and employers on when their dedicated clinics will be provided.

Connecticut has been using a phased approach to its COVID-19 vaccine program because of the very limited supply of the vaccine that it has been receiving from the federal government. The program initially began in December with healthcare providers and medical first responders, and then expanded in January to include all individuals over the age of 75 and certain congregate settings, followed by those over the age of 65 in mid-February. All previously eligible individuals and settings will continue to be eligible after March 1.

"In a perfect world, we would have enough doses of the vaccine to get it to all 3.6 million people in Connecticut right now, however each state is being given a very limited supply, which is why we must take this phased approach," **Governor Lamont said**. "Connecticut's healthcare providers have been doing an amazing job getting the vaccine to people as quickly as they can, and using age as the only qualifying factor is one of the reasons why they've had success so far. The last thing we want to do is complicate the process for them and cause delays that slow things down and exacerbate issues regarding equitable access. A vaccination program of this magnitude is unprecedented in recent times, and I appreciate everyone's understanding of the fluid nature of this situation. My goal is to get as many people vaccinated as quickly as possible, and I believe this is the best path to meeting that challenge."

"We have been in the COVID-19 marathon for approaching a year and now our race becomes a sprint to beat the variants of COVID-19 that are now circulating in the state and elsewhere and to return to a sense of normalcy for ourselves, our families and our communities," **Connecticut Acting Public Health Commissioner Dr. Deidre Gifford, who also serves as co-chair of the Governor's COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group, said**. "The Department of Public Health is committed to an equitable vaccination program. Sticking with an age-based vaccine rollout allows our vaccine providers to get as many shots as possible as quickly and equitably as possible into the arms of Connecticut residents, and vaccinating our education and childcare workforce will get our children back in the classroom this school year."

"Ensuring communities of color have access to vaccines is one of the most important and impactful ways we will get this pandemic behind us," **Dr. Reginald Eadie, president & CEO of Trinity Health New England and co-chair of the Governor's COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group, said**. "Using age as an eligibility criterion makes it clear to all of our residents, especially those who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19, that the vaccine is here, it's available, and provides for an easier registration process to actually receive the vaccine. Education is important when it comes to addressing vaccine hesitancy, but we must also have a simple process to make sure those who need the vaccine receive the vaccine. This new timeline not only informs residents of when they can anticipate they will be eligible to be vaccinated, but it also provides vaccinators direction on when and where to target their own outreach and education efforts."

"Equitable access to vaccine for our communities that have been hardest hit by COVID-19 has always been the priority of the allocation subcommittee," **Nichelle Mullins, president and CEO of Charter Oak Health Center, and Zita Lazzarini, associate professor of public health sciences at UConn Health, both of whom serve as the co-chairs of the allocation subcommittee of the Governor's COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group, said in a joint statement**. "We agree with the governor's approach and, while not ideal, we understand that a continuation of the age-based system simplifies the requirements for vaccination. We also applaud the state's commitment to set tangible benchmarks for providers to

vaccinate residents living in Connecticut's cities and municipalities with large underserved and high-risk populations. These benchmarks are intended as affirmative steps to increase equity in access to vaccines and to remediate inequities that have accrued so far."

Connecticut Business and Industry Association president and CEO Chris DiPentima said that while essential employers had spent time and resources preparing for the vaccine rollout based on the initial guidance, he understood the need to pivot. "We cannot rebuild our economy and recover from the pandemic without first addressing the public health crisis," he said. "This new approach allows for more workers across Connecticut to get vaccinated in a short period of time, and it eliminates potentially complicated rules, making it easier and more equitable for everyone to receive their vaccination. It is critical that we vaccinate as many people as possible as quickly as possible."

All eligible individuals in Connecticut are required to make an appointment in advance of receiving the vaccine. Residents aged 55 to 64 should not attempt to make an appointment now – they will not be able to schedule one until the program expands to their age group on March 1.

To locate vaccination clinics, individuals should visit [ct.gov/covidvaccine \(https://ct.gov/covidvaccine\)](https://ct.gov/covidvaccine) and enter their zip code. From there, users will be shown the nearest available clinics and provided with specific directions on how to make an appointment at each one, including over the internet and over the telephone.

Those who do not have access to the internet can call Connecticut's Vaccine Appointment Assist Line at **877-918-2224**. The line is open seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

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